

## Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 SSO-00 OFA-01 /072 W

----- 117216

R 301018Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9507

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSEI NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK BY POUCH

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU BY POUCH

AMCONSUL MANDALAY BY POUCH

USLO PEKING BY POUCH

AMCONSUL UDORN BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BM

SUBJECT: JOINT WEEKA #15

### 1. BURMESE DENY DEATHS OF THAI FISHERMEN (LOU)

VICE-CHIEF OF STAFF (NAVY) AND ANOTHER SENIOR BURMA NAVY OFFICER DENIED TO DATT APRIL 29 THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY DEATHS, AS CLAIMED BY BANGKOK PRESS, IN RECENT CAPTURE BY BURMESE PATROL BOAT OF THREE THAI FISHING VESSELS. THE NAVY OFFICERS CONFIRMED THE CAPTURE, WHICH HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED IN BURMESE-LANGUAGE PRESS BUT WITHOUT MENTION OF THAI CHARGES. BANGKOK PRESS CLAIMED INCIDENT OCCURRED IN THAI TERRITORIAL WATERS APRIL 23, IN ANDAMAN SEA, WITH BURMESE VESSEL OPENING FIRE ON FISHING BOATS KILLING AS MANY AS 23. THAI EMBOFF REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE CASE PENDING

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INVESTIGATION REPORT FROM BANGKOK.

2. AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT BY BURMA AIR FORCE (LOU)

AFTER CAREFULLY CONSIDERING ESTIMATED COSTS, LIMITED PERIOD OF FMS SUPPORTABILITY AND APPROXIMATE DELIVERY SCHEDULES, BURMA AIR FORCE HAS ELIMINATED U.S. T/AT-33 AIRCRAFT FROM FURTHER PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATION.

COMMENT: BAF, SEEKING TO UPDATE AGEING FLEET OF TACTICAL AIRCRAFT, HAS REQUESTED INFORMATION ON AVAILABILITY OF OTHER U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT WHICH IT FEELS ARE CAPABLE OF FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS AT A REASONABLE COST.

3. NARCOTICS: LO HSING-HAN TRIAL (UNCLAS)

COURT TRYING TRAFFICKER LO HSING-HAN APRIL 29 FORMALLY "CHARGED" HIM--I.E., HELD THAT EVIDENCE SO FAR PRESENTED JUSTIFIES CONVICTION UNLESS REFUTED--ON COUNTS OF TREASON AND IMPEDING SOCIALIST ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION. UNDER FIRST CHARGE, LO WAS ACCUSED OF HAVING GONE UNDERGROUND WITH 800 FOLLOWERS ON APRIL 30, 1973 WITH INTENTION OF CONDUCTING ARMED INSURRECTION. SECOND CHARGE ACCUSES LO OF SUPERVISING THE SMUGGLING OUT OF THE COUNTRY OF OPIUM AND JADE AND SMUGGLING INTO THE COUNTRY CONSUMER GOODS, GOLD BARS, AND ARMS. LO HAS PLEADED NOT GUILTY, AND DEFENSE WILL NOW BEGIN RE-EXAMINING 15 PROSECUTION WITNESSES ON MAY 15.

COMMENT: THE TERM "SUPERVISING" IN THE SECOND CHARGE MAY BE KEY SINCE THE DEFENSE CLAIMS THAT LO DID NOT PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE SMUGGLING.

4. CENTRAL WORKERS COUNCIL CRITICAL OF GUB ENTERPRISES (SECLAS)

THE TENTH MEETING OF THE CENTRAL PEOPLE'S WORKERS COUNCIL, WHICH CONCLUDED APRIL 29, WAS UNUSUALLY CRITICAL OF THE STATE OF GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES AND THE POOR TREATMENT OF WORKERS. WHILE THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN CALLED FOR TIGHTER DISCIPLINE OVER WORKERS, MANY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LOCAL COUNCILS FAULTED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FOR LAST YEAR'S DISTURBANCES, AND CITED CORRUPT MANAGEMENT, POOR DISTRIBUTION OF RAW MATERIALS, AND LACK OF INCENTIVES FOR ONGOING DISCONTENT AMONG WORKERS.

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COMMENT: (LOU) THE WORKERS COUNCILS LIST OF GRIEVANCES ARE NOT NEW, OF COURSE. HOWEVER, THE CRITICISMS AS CARRIED IN PRESS REPORTS APPEAR TO BE STRONGER AND MORE SHARPLY FOCUSED ON THE WEAKNESS IN STATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM THAN IN THE PAST. THEIR TONE ALSO CONFIRMS REPORTS THAT DISCONTENT AMONG WORKERS REMAINS AT HIGH LEVEL, LEADING TO SPECULATION THAT RENEWED DISTURBANCES MAY TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY ORGANIZED

EFFORT TO PROMOTE SUCH DISTURBANCES, NOTWITHSTANDING RUMORS WHICH MAY BE PROMPTED IN PART BY MASS RALLY PLANNED BY GUB FOR WORKERS DAY MAY 1.

5. CIGARETTE RAKE-OFFS ENDED? (UNCLAS)

EFFECTIVE APRIL 20, GUB SUSPENDED ALL "AGENTS" DEALING IN CIGARETTES, AND TURNED OVER DISTRIBUTION TO TRADE CORPORATION 3 WHICH IN TURN WILL SELL CIGARETTES THROUGH COOPERATIVES AND OTHER OFFICIAL OUTLETS. PRESS REPORTS OF ACTION ATTRIBUTED IT TO DECISION BY NEW INDUSTRY MINISTER U HAL AYE.

COMMENT: (LOU) DISTRIBUTION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS HAS BEEN BY ESTABLISHED DEALERS, BUT SINCE THERE ARE MOSTLY CHINESE, INDIAN, OR "CAPITALIST" THEY HAVE HAD TO ACQUIRE THEIR STOCKS FROM LICENSED AGENTS. DECISION TO ABOLISH THE LATTER IS A BOLD ONE, SINCE MAJORITY OF AGENTS WERE INFLUENTIAL GUB OR PARTY OFFICIALS OR THEIR WIVES. ISSUE OF CIGARETTE AGENCY PRIVILEGES HAS BEEN A WELL-KNOWN MEANS OF PROVIDING SUCH INDIVIDUALS WITH RAKE-OFFS. AMONG BEST-KNOWN AGENTS WERE EX-REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBERS TIN PE AND MAUNG SHWE. SIMILAR SYSTEM OF AGENCIES OPERATES WITH RESPECT TO SOME OTHER SCARCE PRODUCTS SUCH AS SUGAR. ELIMINATION OF SUCH AGENCIES WOULD BE A FURTHER STEP TOWARD A SOMEWHAT MORE EGALITARIAN ASPECT OF BURMESE SOCIALISM. IT WILL NOT, HOWEVER, ELIMINATE PRIVATE TRADE IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS, SINCE TRADERS WILL NOW ACQUIRE THEIR STOCKS ILLICITLY FROM T.C. 3 OR FROM COOPERATIVE OFFICIALS.

6. U.S. MUSICAL PERFORMANCES (UNCLAS)

MCLAIN FAMILY BAND, USIS-SPONSORED BLUEGRASS ATTRACTION, ENDED A SUCCESSFUL FOUR-DAY VISIT TO RANGOON DURING WHICH THEY GAVE TWO PERFORMANCES BEFORE A TOTAL OF ABOUT 4,000 PERSONS. ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BURMESE PUBLIC NOT GENERALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE OF BLUEGRASS, THE SPIRIT AND EVIDENT GOOD WILL OF THE MCLAINS' MUSIC CAUSED AN ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION BY THE AUDIENCE AND SEVERAL FAVORABLE CRITICAL COLUMNS IN NEWSPAPERS. IN ADDITION, THE MCLAINS WERE FEATURED ON ENGLISH SERVICE OF BURMA BROADCASTING SYSTEM. OSBORN

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